

VZCZCXRO3748

OO RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM RUEHNH
DE RUEHPF #1960/01 3031011

ZNR UUUUU ZZH

O 301011Z OCT 06

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7536

INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY 0135

RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY 0052

RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 2242

RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0392

RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 0373

RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 0526

RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0545

RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 3100

RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 1551

RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2190

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 PHNOM PENH 001960

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/MLS, IO, PRM

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [EAID](#) [ASEC](#) [KDEM](#) [CB](#)

SUBJECT: CAMBODIA REVIEWS DEMOCRATIC PROGRESS SINCE 1991

PARIS PEACE ACCORDS

¶1. (U) Summary. On October 21, the International Relations Institute organized a 15-year anniversary academic forum reviewing the successes and failures of the 1991 Paris Peace Accords and their implementation during the subsequent UNTAC period. Cambodian government officials dominated the list of speakers, with CPP President Chea Sim providing opening remarks and Prime Minister Hun Sen delivering the closing address to participants. International participants, most having played a role in the Paris peace negotiation process or during the UNTAC period, came from Britain, Germany, Canada, Russia, the United States, and India. NGOs and the opposition party were largely absent from the gathering. Government speakers lauded the role of Hun Sen for bringing security to the country after UNTAC's departure by negotiating defections of senior Khmer Rouge commanders and their units. The PM reminisced about the four-year negotiation process that led up to the signing of the 1991 accords, and credited his win-win policy for the demise of the Khmer Rouge as a political force. End Summary.

Cambodia 15 Years Later

¶2. (U) With the backing of the RGC, the International Relations Institute organized a one-day academic forum to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the signing of the Paris Peace Accords. The program featured primarily Cambodian government and international speakers; NGOs and civil society representatives were omitted from the program. CPP President Chea Sim opened the forum, praising Hun Sen and former King Sihanouk for their respective roles in promoting peace and national reconciliation. The Senate leader recognized the role of the international community as well, and highlighted the importance of non-retaliation among domestic political leaders in achieving peace, although he noted the Khmer Rouge were an exception and refused to disarm and participate in the 1993 elections. During his presentation, DPM Sok An referenced UNTAC's failure to bring peace, as stipulated in the 1991 accords, and enumerated the positive efforts by PM Hun Sen over the past 15 years that have led to peace and stability in Cambodia.

¶3. (U) UNDP Resident Representative Douglas Gardner outlined the progress Cambodia has made over the past 15 years in both the political and economic spheres, while

noting the UN's commitment to continue support to the RGC in the implementation of the national development strategy. Gardner flagged future oil/gas revenues as an area for government planning efforts, and warned that a recent survey stating only one out of two primary school entrants continues to secondary school is a worrisome statistic. ASEAN Deputy Secretary-General Soeung Rathchavy reviewed ASEAN's political

SIPDIS

stance towards Cambodia from the late 1970s until Cambodia's joining of ASEAN in April 1999. Ambassadors from the EU, Japan, France, and the UK focused their remarks on their respective assistance programs in helping Cambodia realize the goals of the Paris Accords: political reconciliation/reintegration, peace and national unity, rehabilitation/reconstruction, and continued international support and cooperation.

¶4. (U) International speakers included Igor Rogachev, former Soviet Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs; Nick Etheridge, Deputy Head of the Canadian Delegation to the Paris Negotiations; Peter Christian Hauswedell, former German Deputy General for Asian and Pacific Affairs; and former U.S. Ambassador Timothy Carney, who had worked for UNTAC's Public Affairs Office. Etheridge recalled the 1993 elections and the widespread turnout of Cambodian voters throughout most of the country, despite the threat of violence by the Khmer Rouge who boycotted the elections. Hauswedell praised the 1991 Accords for putting Cambodia on the path to democracy, noting Cambodia is better off today than 15 years ago. He argued that Cambodia has also made better progress than other countries, e.g., Somalia, East Timor, Afghanistan, where the UN has tried to transition a country from war to stability and development. The former German official noted that the Accords failed to lead to peace, and the demobilization

PHNOM PENH 00001960 002 OF 003

effort was not a success. Looking at Cambodia today, Hauswedell described three areas where Cambodian politics remain problematic: the personalization of politics, difficulty in forming a government, and lack of institutionalization and respect for the opposition. Ambassador Carney focused his remarks on the role of constitutions in helping to establish a society based on the rule of law.

¶5. (U) Among Cambodian scholars, former Rector of the University of Phnom Penh (and currently an RGC official in the Ministry of Education) Pit Chamnan noted that many in the audience (not just UNTAC) had contributed to peace and democracy in Cambodia. Picking up on Peter Hauswedell's comment that Cambodia has fared better than other countries, Chamnan gave Hun Sen full credit for the country's progress. He noted that Cambodia has provided a favorable environment for the establishment of NGOs and civil society, and credited some NGOs with contributing to Cambodia's democratic progress.

¶6. (U) Secretary-General for the Natural Disaster Management Committee Peou Samy said that democracy had to be adapted to Cambodian culture. He denounced NGOs for criticizing the government and blamed them for the divisiveness that has led to violence in the country. Samy also praised Hun Sen's policy for dealing with the Khmer Rouge: divide, weaken, conquer, rehabilitate and reintegrate. Tep Darong, President of the Royal Academy of Judicial Professions, focused most of his comments on the post-UNTAC period, and applauded the government's record of strengthening human capacity, the decentralization process, social reforms, gender and environmental issues, and progress towards finalizing an anti-corruption law. The only Cambodian speaker to provide an academic look at the UNTAC period was Ros Chanrabot, Vice President of the Royal Academy of Cambodia, who noted that external factors and changing attitudes of the former Soviet Union and China towards Indochina in the late 1980s/early 1990s had favored the Paris negotiation process. Within Cambodia, he

continued, there was a resurgence in Buddhism and internal pressure for social harmony and political reconciliation. Finally, regional powers (e.g., Thailand and Indonesia) helped to support and facilitate a negotiated settlement between all the parties.

Hun Sen: I Did It My Way

¶7. (SBU) In a nearly two-hour closing speech to the audience, PM Hun Sen offered participants a series of stories and vignettes of the negotiation process leading up to the 1991 Paris Accords, recalling his first meeting with Igor Rogachev as a 27-year-old Foreign Minister. He noted that in approaching the negotiations, his two strategic goals were to maintain the national achievements realized since the collapse of the Pol Pot regime in 1979, and to prevent the Khmer Rouge from ever regaining power; there was no mention of advancing democracy or national reconciliation. Most of his remarks, however, covered the post-UNTAC period and the PM minimized the role of the UN and international community in helping to ease Cambodia out of its failed state status and putting the country on the road to democracy. The PM said his win-win strategy was the sole reason for the peace enjoyed by Cambodians today, and was predicated on three guarantees to former Khmer Rouge combatants: personal safety for themselves and their families, continued employment, no confiscation of land or property. The PM added that he supported the Extraordinary Chambers' efforts to bring former Khmer Rouge leaders to justice and thanked donors for assisting in that effort. He then skipped forward to the RGC's overall development policies under the Rectangular Development Strategy and Cambodia's historic act of joining the UN mission to the Sudan after hosting UN peacekeepers in Cambodia less than two decades ago.

Comment

PHNOM PENH 00001960 003 OF 003

¶8. (SBU) The conference was very much a government-sponsored effort to highlight the failures of UNTAC (e.g., lack of peace and stability) and attribute the country's successes to Hun Sen. The presentations by RGC members were so similar that it appeared that a standard set of talking points had been passed around in advance. The deliberate exclusion of FUNCINPEC and the Sam Rainsy Party, as well as the NGO community, in particular the Son Sann Foundation (Son Sann was the fourth signatory of the Paris Accords), was noted by many observers. The German Ambassador remarked that the RGC-dominated proceedings and self-congratulatory speeches did little to evoke the spirit of national reconciliation that was one of the key goals of the Paris Accords. UN Human Rights Office director Margo Picken mentioned that the UN initially had discussed holding a real symposium on the Paris Accords and lessons learned fifteen years later, but the Cambodian government had resisted the proposal. When the RGC realized that others were considering going ahead with 15-year anniversary conferences, the RGC enlisted the International Research Institute to organize a conference dominated by government speakers. Interestingly, as the PM discussed his strategy for infiltrating the Khmer Rouge and convincing its commanders to defect to the government, FUNCINPEC Secretary General Nhek Bun Chhay was seated behind the PM as an invited guest. The FUNCINPEC official, once a FUNCINPEC military leader who opposed the CPP during the 1997 coup, and later facilitated the reconciliation between Hun Sen and Prince Norodom Ranariddh following the 2003 elections, has most recently worked quietly with the PM to remove Ranariddh as head of FUNCINPEC. The PM's win-win strategy against the Khmer Rouge is virtually the same one used successfully against FUNCINPEC today. End Comment.

MUSSOMELI